

Jesus is Baptized

by Sharla Guenther

There once was a man named John the Baptist, who actually was one of Jesus' cousins. He became a preacher and was telling others to ask for forgiveness for things they had done wrong. He wanted to help others change their lives so they could become like a brand new person inside.

He was doing this not to be better than Jesus, but to help Jesus. By preaching to others to feel bad for their mistakes and to ask for forgiveness. By teaching that they needed God in their life he was preparing the people to hear from Jesus himself.

John was a man who wanted to live a very simple life. He felt that having a lot of things wasn't important; instead he traveled the desert and told others about what good things God was doing in his life, and how God could do good things in their lives too.

So John didn't go to a big house every night to eat a big supper and go to sleep in a nice comfortable bed. John didn't have a home and he probably slept outside sometimes. Other nights he may have been invited to stay with friends he made along the way.

For food he ate insects like locusts (which are kind of like grasshoppers); he would find some wild honey to eat with them. Remember, John wanted to live a simple life; he felt like God was all he needed. Nothing else was more important.

When people heard that John was in the area they would come from all over to listen to him and get baptized. Now for some of you, you might not quite understand what baptism is, and that's okay. If you've ever seen someone get baptized, it's sort of like taking a bath with clothes on.

When someone believes in God, baptism is a way of showing others that you believe in Him and want to live your life the way God wants. It's like having a bath to make yourself clean on the inside. When you get baptized, it's a special way of showing that you understand that you have and need God's forgiveness.

When some men named the Pharisees and Sadducees came to listen to John he had a strict warning for them: they needed to feel bad for the wrong things they had done and ask forgiveness for their mistakes. But these men didn't think they were doing anything wrong, they weren't sorry, and so John would not baptize them.

As people were coming to John to be baptized, they were wondering if he was the Saviour they had waited for. John heard what they were saying and he told them, "I am baptizing you now, but very soon someone greater than me will come. He is so great that if He asked me to carry His shoes it would be an amazing honour."

John continued to preach and baptize people until one day Jesus came by to be baptized. John didn't know what to say; all he thought was, "how could I, just a regular man baptize Jesus the Saviour of the world?"

John said to Jesus, "You should be baptizing me. I cannot baptize you Lord."

Jesus replied, "It's important that I do this now. I am ready and I want to be an example to others and show them that it's important."

So John took Jesus and baptized Him. He placed his hand on His back and laid him down into the water until He was covered. Then he brought Him back up again. As soon as Jesus was baptized the sky opened up and the Holy Spirit came like a beautiful white dove, and landed right on Jesus shoulder. Then a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, I love him and I am pleased with him."

Just like when Jesus died, was buried, and rose again. When we lie down in the water, we are dying or getting rid of all the bad things we've done. Under the water we are buried. Then when we are brought out of the water we are a brand new person to God.

Baptism is important because Jesus made sure this was the first thing He did when He started His ministry. It is also the last thing He said before going up to heaven. He said, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you..." Matthew 28:19,20